

10-2-102. Duties of board — employee qualifications. (1) The board shall establish a statewide service for veterans and their families as provided in this section. The board shall:

(a) actively cooperate with local, state, and federal agencies whose services encompass the affairs of veterans and their families;

(b) promote the general welfare of all veterans and their families;

(c) assist veterans and their families who are residents of this state in filing claims for the benefits to which they are entitled. In carrying out this duty, the board and its accredited employees shall, upon the request of an eligible claimant, act as agents for the claimant in developing and presenting claims for benefits provided under Title 38 of the United States Code. The board shall seek to secure speedy and just action for each claimant. A board employee officially acting as an agent on behalf of a claimant must be properly accredited and recognized pursuant to 38 CFR 14.628 and 14.629.

(d) officially advocate for the fair treatment of Montana's veterans and their families by the U.S. department of veterans affairs with respect to claims processing, health care services, and other veteran-related programs and inform veterans and their family members of all available grievance procedures;

(e) develop and implement an information and communication program to keep veterans and their family members informed about available federal, state, and community-based services and benefits. The program may include but is not limited to:

(i) development and distribution of a services and benefits directory;

(ii) regular public service announcements through various media;

(iii) an internet website with information and links relevant to veterans and their families and including information about board meetings and activities related to veterans' affairs; and

(iv) a quarterly newsletter, which may be printed or electronically distributed by e-mail or by posting it to an appropriate website.

(f) seek grants to help fund veterans' programs established pursuant to this section;

(g) develop a memorandum of understanding with the federal veterans' employment and training service and with other appropriate entities to facilitate interagency cooperation, such as resource sharing, cross-training, data and information sharing, and service delivery coordination;

(h) establish management tools, including but not limited to needs assessments, policy statements, program goals and objectives, performance measures, and program evaluation criteria;

(i) prepare a biennial report to the governor, the department of military affairs, the appropriate legislative interim committee, and veterans' service organizations. The report must

include but is not limited to the latest information about the demographics of Montana's veteran population, a needs assessment, annual summaries of the veterans' special revenue accounts established in 10-2-112 and 10-2-603, and a review of the veterans' affairs budget.

(j) request legislation responsive to identified needs.

(2) Employees of the board must be residents of this state. Whenever possible, all employees of the board must have served in the military forces of the United States during World War I, World War II, the Korean war, the Vietnam conflict, or other period of conflict involving the United States military overseas and must have been honorably discharged. Preference for employment must be given to disabled veterans.

(3) The board shall hire an administrator to implement board policy and carry out the duties of the board.

History: En. Sec. 2, Ch. 111, L. 1945; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 92, L. 1971; Sec. 77-1002, R.C.M. 1947; amd. and redes. by Sec. 37, Ch. 121, L. 1974; amd. Sec. 39, Ch. 535, L. 1975; R.C.M. 1947, 71-2202; amd. Sec. 11, Ch. 7, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 491, L. 2003.

Cross-References

Rules for determining residence, 1-1-215.

Veterans' public employment preference, Title 39, ch. 29.

Persons with disabilities public employment preference, Title 39, ch. 30.

10-2-112. Veterans' services special revenue account — sources of funds — designated uses. (1) There is a veterans' services account in the state special revenue fund, established pursuant to 17-2-102(1)(b), to the credit of the board.

(2) Money transferred pursuant to 15-1-122(3)(d) from license plate sales as described in 10-2-114 and from gifts, grants, or donations must be deposited in the veterans' services account.

(3) Legislative appropriations of money in the veterans' services account must be used for the purposes identified in 10-2-102 or other functions authorized by the board.

(4) There is a veterans' services federal account in the federal special revenue fund established for federal funds received under 10-2-106.

History: En. Sec. 3, Ch. 491, L. 2003; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 542, L. 2005.

Compiler's Comments

2005 Amendment: Chapter 542 in (2) near beginning substituted "15-1-122(3)(d)" for "15-1-122(3)(h)". Amendment effective January 1, 2006.